

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend claims 1-31 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) Lighter than air aircraft characterised in that it comprises at least two balloons [[(1)]] connected together by connecting means forming a chassis [[(2)]].
2. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 1, characterised in that the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]] are connected to the [[said]] balloons [[(1)]] through an electromagnetic type connection.
3. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 1, characterised in that the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]] are connected to at least one of the [[said]] balloons [[(1)]] through a mechanical connection articulated about at least one axis [[(22)]] approximately parallel to the longitudinal axis of the [[said]] aircraft.
4. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 3~~ claim 1, characterised in that the [[said]] balloon(s) [[(1)]] on one side of the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]] are connected to the [[said]] balloon(s) [[(1)]] on the other side of the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]] by elastic means [[(11)]].
5. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, characterised in that the [[said]] chassis [[(2)]] includes carrying means [[(24)]] designed to support equipment and / or at least one person.
6. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 5, characterised in that the [[said]] carrying means [[(24)]] are essentially within the volume lying between the [[said]] balloons [[(1)]].
7. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, characterised

in that the [[said]] balloons [[(1)]] and the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]] together form an essentially symmetric assembly.

8. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, characterised in that it comprises a balloon [[(1)]] on each side of the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]].

9. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, characterised in that it comprises two balloons [[(1)]] on each side of the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]].

10. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 9, characterised in that the [[said]] balloons [[(1)]] lie in an approximately horizontal plane.

11. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 9, characterised in that the [[said]] two balloons [[(1)]] on the same side of the [[said]] connecting means [[(2)]] are placed one above the other.

12. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 11~~ claim 1, characterised in that the aircraft comprises means of propulsion and / or controlling the stability of the [[said]] aircraft.

13. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 12, characterised in that the [[said]] propulsion means comprise at least one first engine [[(35)]] capable of producing a thrust along the longitudinal axis of the [[said]] aircraft and located at or close to the centre of gravity of the [[said]] aircraft.

14. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 12 ~~or to claim 13~~, characterised in that it comprises pitch control means.

15. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 14, characterised in that the [[said]] pitch control means ~~preferably~~ include at least two engines (31), (32) installed approximately on the longitudinal axis of the [[said]] aircraft, one forward from the centre of gravity of the [[said]] aircraft, and the other aft from the centre of gravity of the [[said]] aircraft.

16. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 11 to 15~~ claim 11, characterised in that it comprises roll control means.

17. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 16, characterised in that the [[said]] roll control means ~~preferably~~ comprise at least two engines (33), (34) installed on each side of the longitudinal axis of the [[said]] aircraft, in an approximately horizontal plane.

18. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~claims~~ claim 16 and 17, characterised in that the [[said]] roll control means comprise roll control engines (33), (34) ~~are~~ mounted on an axis perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the [[said]] aircraft and passing through the centre of gravity of the [[said]] aircraft or close to it.

19. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 11 to 18~~ claim 1, characterised in that ~~the said it comprises~~ stability control means (31), (32), (33), (34) which can act on the altitude of the [[said]] aircraft.

20. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 11 to 19~~ claim 1, characterised in that ~~the said it comprises~~ propulsion means [[also]] which further comprise a means of displacing the [[said]] aircraft laterally.

21. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 20, characterised in that the [[said]] lateral displacement means comprise at least two lateral engines (36), (37), capable of producing thrusts in opposite directions along a horizontal axis perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the

[[said]] aircraft and passing through or close to the centre of gravity of the [[said]] aircraft.

22. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 21~~ claim 1, characterised in that it comprises directional means.

23. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 22, characterised in that the [[said]] directional means comprise at least one control surface.

24. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 23, characterised in that it comprises at least one left control surface [[(41)]] and at least one right control surface [[(42)]] mounted at the aft of the [[said]] aircraft.

25. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 24~~ claim 1, characterised in that it comprises at least one vertical stabiliser (51), (52).

26. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~claims 22 and~~ claim 25, characterised in that it comprises at least one control surface [[(511)]] mounted on the [[said]] vertical stabiliser.

27. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 22 to 26~~ claim 22, characterised in that the [[said]] directional means comprise at least one orientation engine installed so as to produce at least a thrust transverse to the longitudinal axis of the [[said]] aircraft.

28. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to claim 27, characterised in that the [[said]] directional means comprise at least two orientation engines (38), (39) mounted with respect to each other so as to produce thrusts in approximately opposite directions.

29. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 28~~ claim 1, characterised in that it comprises remote control means, with or without wire.

30. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to any ~~one of claims 1 to 29~~ claim 1, characterised in that the [[said]] balloons [[(1)]] are approximately cylindrical in shape.

31. (Currently Amended) Aircraft according to ~~any one of claims 1 to 30~~ claim 1, characterised in that it comprises onboard means belonging to the following group:

- picture taking means;
- communication and / or telecommunication means;
- sound pickup means;
- meteorological data acquisition means;
- radiation measurement means;
- air analysis means;
- geographic positioning means;
- means of measuring the speed of objects on the ground and / or in the air and / or at sea.